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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Nineteenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 595th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 19 October 1979, at 11 a.m.

President: Mr. HARRIS (New Zealand)

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24. Mr. [illegible] (Gabon) said he regretted that a draft resolution on a very important subject was available only in English, which was not his working language and which he had difficulty in understanding.

25. Mr. LALOYE (Belgium), expressing agreement with the Japanese representative's position, said that the text of the draft resolution, the merit of which had already appeared in previous documents, had been available for at least 3 months. He failed to understand, therefore, why it had proved impossible to have it translated into the other working languages.

26. Mr. GARCIA-[illegible] (Spain), associating himself with the views expressed by previous speakers, said he regretted that the text was not available in Spanish.

27. Mr. LICHILAMA (Zambia) said that there were communication difficulties in the African Group, in which three of the United Nations working languages were used by representatives. The secretariat should make documents available in all the working languages of UNCTAD.

28. Mr. EL-FATTAL (Syrian Arab Republic) said, with reference to the difficulties experienced by Arabic-speaking delegations, that he associated himself with the comments made by previous speakers.

29. Mr. SOLA VILA (Cuba) said that consideration of the draft resolution should be deferred until it was available in all the working languages.

30. The PRESIDENT said it was an unfortunate fact that, owing to lack of resources, the text could not be produced in all the working languages in time for consideration at the current meeting. It had however been approved by all the regional groups. He therefore appealed to the Board to finish its business at the current meeting.

31. Mrs. [illegible] (Algeria) said that the Board would have to give up its habit of finishing off its business at a night meeting without the necessary documents. She appealed to the President to request at the next session that no meetings should be held unless the documents were available in all the working languages. As representatives of their Governments, the members of the Board must fully understand the texts they were adopting.

32. Mr. GARCIA-[illegible] said that the Board's consideration of the draft resolution on the present occasion should not be taken as a precedent.

33. Mr. STEINBACHER (Administrative Service) said that the financial implications of operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution TD/B/L.[illegible] would be [illegible],000, on the assumption that the high-level group would meet at Geneva in the Spring of 1970 for one and a half weeks with services in six languages and 50 pages of documentation.

34. Mr. ALULA (Ethiopia) proposed that, in the first line of operative paragraph 1, the words "to set up" should be replaced by the words "to convene".

35. The amendment was adopted.

36. Mr. [illegible] (Philippines) said he took it that, in accordance with UNCTAD's existing practice, the use of the phrase "high-level expert" would not preclude participation by a representative of ministerial rank. He felt that operative paragraphs 2 and 3 would be better interchanged, but would not press his suggestion.

43. Under agenda item 7 (a), the Committee had approved a draft resolution on the integrated programme for commodities (TD/B/L.[illegible]) and, as already mentioned, a draft resolution on tungsten (TD/B(XIX)/SC.1/L.[illegible]). Under item 7 (b), it had approved a draft decision on the group of governmental experts on the concepts of the payment aid and flow targets (TD/B(XIX)/SC.1/L.12) and, under item 7 (c), it had approved a draft decision on the Working Group on International Shipping Legislation (TD/B(XIX)/SC.1/L.[illegible]).

44. The CHAIRMAN invited the Board to consider the draft decisions and resolutions submitted by Sectional Committee I.

Draft decision on ship-to- (TD/B(XIX)/SC.1/L.[illegible])

45. The draft decision was adopted.

Draft decision on item 11 (a), (c) and (d) of the agenda of the fifth session of the Conference (TD/B(XIX)/SC.1/L.[illegible])

46. The draft decision was adopted.

Draft decision on Conference resolution 111 (V) on cross-therein, the technological capacity of developing countries (TD/B(XIX)/SC.1/L.[illegible])

47. The draft decision was adopted.

Draft decision on paragraph 10 of Conference resolution 102 (V) on development aspects of the transfer of technology (TD/B(XIX)/SC.1/L.[illegible])

48. The draft decision was adopted.

Draft decision on the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Committee on the Rationalization of UNCTAD's Machinery (Conference resolution 114 (V)) (TD/B(XIX)/SC.1/L.[illegible])

49. The draft decision was adopted.

Draft decision on paragraph 7 of Conference resolution 114 (V), on the Working Party on the UNCTAD medium-term plan and the programme budget (TD/B(XIX)/SC.1/L.7)

50. The draft decision was adopted.

Draft decision on the establishment of a multilateral guarantee facility (TD/B(XIX)/SC.1/L.[illegible]/Rev.1)

51. The draft decision was adopted.

Draft decision on item 16 (e) of the agenda of the fifth session of the Conference (TD/B(XIX)/SC.1/L.[illegible])

52. The draft decision was adopted.

Draft decision on paragraph 1) of Conference resolution 127 (V) regarding future meetings of governmental experts of developing countries (TD/B(XIX)/SC.1/L.10)

53. The draft decision was adopted.

Draft decision on international commodity trade (TD/B/(XIX)/SC.1/L.11)

54. The draft decision was adopted.

Draft resolution on Special Measures in favour of Least Developed Countries (TD/B/(XIX)/SC.1/L.12)

55. The draft resolution was adopted.

Draft resolution on transfer (TD/B/(XIX)/SC.1/L.13)

56. The draft resolution was adopted.

Draft resolution on trade expansion (TD/B/(XIX)/SC.1/L.14)

57. Mr. [illegible] (Brazil) pointed out that, in the French text, the concluding part of operative paragraph 2 should read "[illegible]", instead of "[illegible]".

58. The draft resolution was adopted.

Draft resolution on the Integrated Programme for Commodities (TD/B/L.[illegible])

59. The draft resolution was adopted.

Adoption of the report of Sessional Committee I (TD/B/(XIX)/SC.1/L.5 and Add.1 and 2; TD/B/L.[illegible] and Add.1)

60. Mr. [illegible] (Hungary), speaking on behalf of Group D, said that, after Sessional Committee I had approved draft decision TD/B/(XIX)/SC.1/L.9/Rev.1, his Group had entered a reservation which did not appear in the Committee's report. He requested that the following sentence should be inserted in document TD/B/(XIX)/SC.1/L.5/Add.1 with reference to that decision: "Member countries of Group D entered their reservation contained in document TD/B/733, paragraph 39".

61. It was so agreed.

62. The PRESIDENT said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Board wished to adopt the report of Sessional Committee I (TD/B/(XIX)/SC.1/L.5 and Add. 1 and 2; TD/B/L.[illegible] and Add.1), as amended, in its entirety and decide to include it as an integral part of the report of the Trade and Development Board on its nineteenth session.

63. It was so decided.

Draft decision on Conference resolution 130 (V) on multilateral trade negotiations (TD/B/L.[illegible])

64. The PRESIDENT said that he had referred Conference decision 130 (V) on multilateral trade negotiations, on which Sessional Committee I had been unable to reach agreement, to his Contact Group and it had produced a draft decision (TD/B/L.[illegible]) which, he regretted to say, was available only in English.

65. Mr. GARCIA-AMADOZ (Spain) said that he wished to place on record his delegation's disagreement with the President's decision to proceed with consideration of documents not available in all the working languages.

66. The draft decision was adopted.

67. Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the decision just adopted was a purely procedural one that limited itself to endorsing Conference resolution 132 (V). He wished to refer to the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 at the fifth session of the Conference and in Sessional Committee I. By the time the report of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and other relevant documentation had been analysed at the Board's twentieth session, most of the decisions taken at the Tokyo Round of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations would have been put into effect.

68. Negotiations must be continued, as a matter of urgency, in the appropriate forum in order to ensure that the interests and rights of the developing countries, particularly the least-developed among them, were fully safeguarded and that, in accordance with the objectives of the Tokyo Declaration, progress was made towards greater liberalization of trade and the elimination of trade barriers against the exports of developing countries.

69. Mr. SIMON (Hungary), speaking on behalf of Group D, said it was the understanding of his Group that the words "global evaluation" in the decision just adopted included the possible consequences to countries not participating in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations.

70. Mr. MENZEL (Federal Republic of Germany), speaking on behalf of Group B, said he regretted that, in spite of concerted efforts, it had not proved possible to arrive at a substantive decision on the subject. He would refer to his explanation of Group B's position in Sessional Committee I.

Draft decision on item 12(a) of the agenda of the fifth session of the Conference (TD/B/L.529)

71. The PRESIDENT said that he had referred Conference agenda item 12(a), which related to the debt problems of developing countries and on which Sessional Committee I had unfortunately been unable to reach agreement, to a small group which had produced a procedural draft decision (TD/B/L.529), available only in English.

72. In the penultimate line of the text, the phrase "together with draft resolution TD/L.196," should be inserted after the words "part B)",". If there were no objections, he would take it that the Board found the text acceptable.

73. The draft decision was adopted.

74. Mr. HAMDER (Pakistan) said that some steps had been taken as a result of the adoption of Board resolution 165 (S-IX) but its implementation to date had been inadequate and, in the interim, the debt problems of the developing countries had continued to grow. The Group of 77 had maintained a flexible negotiating position on the question during the current session in a determined attempt to reach an equitable

solution. To the regret of his delegation, no such solution had been achieved in the absence of a corresponding attitude on the part of Group B. He hoped there would be a more satisfactory outcome at the Board's twentieth session.

75. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) said he associated himself with the views expressed by the representative of Pakistan. The Group of 77 had observed that some Group B delegations had been sympathetic while others had expressed reservations about policy implications and financial implications. He hoped that the inclusion of the item in the twentieth session, by giving such delegations time to consult their Governments, would make it possible to resolve some outstanding questions on the implementation of Board resolution 165 (S-IX) at next session.

76. Mr. [illegible] (Tunisia) said he was voicing the feelings of a number of members of Group A in stating that he shared the regret of the representatives of Pakistan and Bangladesh that it had not been possible to reach agreement in spite of serious negotiations by all parties.

INSTITUTIONAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED MATTERS (Agenda item 11) (continued):

(a) REVISION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE BOARD AND OF ITS MAIN COMMITTEES (continued) (TD/B/L.542)

77. Mr. CHITEMBO (Senior Legal Liaison Officer) reminded the Board that, at its [illegible] meeting, it had decided under rule 82 of the rules of procedure to suspend rule 18 and to request the secretariat to prepare the necessary amendment of rule 18 regarding the election of officers to read:

"At the commencement of the first meeting of each regular session, the Board shall elect a President, two Vice-Presidents and a Rapporteur from among its members ..."

78. That change stemmed from the fact that the General Assembly, on the recommendation of UNCTAD V, had approved an amendment to its resolution 1995 (XIX), to enable the Board to meet in regular session twice annually. The Board had further requested the secretariat to make the consequential changes in other rules and in the cycle in rule 1 of the rules of procedure concerning the rotation of the offices of President and Rapporteur, for consideration by it at its final meeting. The secretariat had taken due account of the statement made at the 523rd meeting by the representative of the Philippines.

79. From consultations with regional spokesmen, it appeared to be the general view that the suggestions made by the secretariat in document TD/B/L.542 were consistent but that more time was required to study them. A decision on the lines of that document would call for the election at the Board's twentieth session of a President from Group D and a Rapporteur from Group B.

80. It seemed desirable therefore that the Board should revert to the earlier proposal of setting up a working party of limited membership, with the traditional composition of six members from the Group of 77, three from Group B, two from Group D and China, to report to the Board during its resumed nineteenth session. The secretariat therefore hoped that the regional groups would advise on the membership of the working party.

91. Mr. [illegible] (Philippines) said that, while he had no objection to the course suggested, he wondered whether the Board could waive the rules of procedure, not [illegible] provision [illegible] to suspend the rules of procedure which required that a working party should be established [illegible] to comply strictly to those rules.

92. Mr. [illegible] (Sudan) said that there had been previous instances of the Board [illegible].

93. Mr. [illegible] (Brazil) said that, in order to [illegible] spokesman of Group D to put the question [illegible] of the lack of time for [illegible].

94. The PRESIDENT [illegible]:

"Having [illegible] six members [illegible] two members [illegible] the required nine-member [illegible] working party, the Board will [illegible]."

He said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Board wished to adopt that draft decision.

95. It was so decided.

(f) DOCUMENTATION PROBLEMS AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE WORK PROGRAMME OF UNCTAD (continued) (TD/B/L.326)

96. The PRESIDENT said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Board wished to adopt draft resolution TD/B/L.326, which he understood had the approval of all regional groups.

97. It was so decided.

98. Mr. PANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking on behalf of the Group D countries and Mongolia, said that the decision just adopted by the Board could not and should not be taken as meaning that the documentation problems existing in UNCTAD were due principally or primarily to the conditions of availability of the conference servicing infrastructure of the United Nations Office at Geneva. Neither should the decision be so construed as following the spirit and the letter of resolution 114 (V); its adoption merely emphasized the need for in-depth consideration of the problem of documentation with a view to preparing concrete recommendations for improving the structure of the present machinery of UNCTAD in the course of the Conference's future work.

99. Furthermore, the decision just adopted could not and should not be interpreted as opposing the activities of UNCTAD to those being conducted in Geneva by other international bodies, in the sense of minimizing the importance of those latter activities for the member States of the United Nations.

100. Lastly, the decision could not and should not be opposed to those provisions of resolution 114 (V) which called for measures to reduce the frequency and duration of meetings of various UNCTAD bodies.

(h) REVIEW OF THE CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES (TD/B/L. [illegible] and Add.1; TD/B(XIX)/CRP.3)

(i) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ACTIONS OF THE BOARD (TD/B/L.63/Add.2; TD/B/C.[illegible]/131/L.13/Add.1)

71. The PRESIDENT reminded the Board that it had already taken a decision at its 512th plenary meeting regarding the resumption of the United Nations Conference from 19-30 November 1979.

72. [illegible] (Poland) drew attention to the fact that no date had been fixed for the second pre-sessional meeting on Programme [illegible]. He hoped that the secretariat would be able to take some specific proposal on the subject to the current meeting.

73. [illegible] (Director, Division for Programme Support Services), noted that in resolution 32/ [illegible], the Fifth Committee had been requested [illegible] a reduction in the number of [illegible] groups and in the duration of meetings and for the distribution of documents [illegible] in advance of meetings. At the same time, however, it had also been [illegible] and called upon the organs [illegible] to establish [illegible]. Such involved additional meeting [illegible] of existing [illegible] and provided for the convening of a large number [illegible]. That was the context in which the secretariat viewed the task of [illegible] the Board.

74. In 1978, UNCTAD had had the record number of 72 meetings, totalling 103 weeks, but at the cost of a severe delay in the preparation and distribution of documents. In the conference years of 1979 [illegible] the number of weeks of meetings would be more than double the average for previous conference years and greater than the average for non-conference years.

75. The main reason for the documentation problem was that adjustments in UNCTAD's resources had been [illegible] compared with the increased number of meetings it was required to service. It would have been ideal to have submitted a calendar of meetings for 1980 in keeping with the recommendations of Conference resolution 32/ (V), but the calendar already included 91½ weeks of meetings without making any provision for the possible resumption of the negotiating conference on the transfer of technology, restrictive business practices, multinational transport, and the Common Fund. Furthermore, the meetings had to be crowded into 39 weeks in view of the reluctance of delegations to agree to meetings during the month of August or at the turn of the year. It would therefore be necessary to hold two or more meetings simultaneously throughout the year.

76. Under those circumstances, the effect of any logistical adjustments in the secretariat on the documentation problem would be marginal, and the situation would remain unchanged, as long as [illegible] meetings. Governments automatically endorsed decisions taken independently on various items without regard to the overall calendar and the total number of meetings.

77. Turning to document TD/B(XIX)/CRP.3, he said that the main change it embodied in relation to TD/B/L.[illegible]/Add.1 was that the session of the Working Party on the Programme Budget and Medium-Term Plan, to be followed by a resumption of the nineteenth session of the Board, had been postponed from October to November. That modification had been rendered necessary by the delay in preparing the section affecting UNCTAD in the programme budget which the Secretary-General of the United Nations was to submit to the General Assembly. The Budget Division in New York had announced that the section would not be available at Geneva until early November, although UNCTAD's preliminary proposals, on which it was based, had reached New York on 17 September.

. that raised the question as to whether the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee would receive the Board's comments on the budget proposals in time to take them into consideration. The UNCTAD secretariat had consulted the spokesmen of the regional groups on that point and, in reference to their wishes, it was currently proposing a date in late November for both the meeting of the Working Party and the resumed session of the Board.

. The changed date was far from convenient, for the UNCTAD secretariat would be required to service three negotiating conferences in the same period and could therefore offer only limited facilities for the Working Party. In addition, care would have to be taken to ensure that that date would not be too late from the point of view of the work schedule of the General Assembly, and the secretariat ventured to hope that delegations in Geneva would endeavour to persuade their colleagues on the Fifth Committee to defer examination of the section of the budget affecting UNCTAD until the beginning of December. He suggested that the President of the Board might also send a letter to the same vein to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee.

100. Other changes in the calendar included fixing the precise date in December 1979 for the ninth session of the _Ad Hoc_ Intergovernmental Committee on the Integrated Programme for Commodities and the transfer of the preparatory meetings on economic co-operation among developing countries from 1979 to 1980. In that connection, it should be noted that, in all the versions except the French, there was a typographical error in footnote _a/_ of document TD/B/(XIX)/C.3: the dates for the preparatory meetings should read 21 January - 8 February.

101. On the proposal of Secretariat, the twelfth session of the Committee on Tungsten had been brought forward from 1981 to 1980 and the tenth session of the _Ad Hoc_ Intergovernmental Committee on the IDC and the third session of the Committee on Transfer of Technology had been added to that year's calendar.

102. The ninth session of the Committee on Invisibles and Financing related to Trade had been deferred from February to April 1980. In order to give the secretariat more time for making preparations and the _ad hoc_ Intergovernmental High-level Group of Experts on the future evolution of the international monetary system had been deferred from January to March for the same reason.

103. The ninth session of the Committee on Commodities had been extended by up to four days, and the seventh session of the Working Group on International Shipping Legislation by one week.

. In view of the decision to confirm the session of the High-level Intergovernmental Working Group to prepare the draft of the contribution of UNCTAD to the new international development strategy, the square brackets should be removed.

examine the budget proposals. He suggested that, when presenting to the General Assembly the report revealing a substantive shortfall in Conference resolution 111 (V), the Secretary-General of the United Nations might refer to the desirability of UNCTAD being given increased material resources in order to solve accumulation problems.

114. Mr. ANASHOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking on behalf of the Group B countries and Mongolia, said that the draft calendar which the Board was called upon to adopt could not fail to create concern, particularly in the light of such facts as the increased number and duration of meetings and the calendar's lack of stability, as reflected in the frequency with which it was altered. The socialist countries had already drawn attention to those facts at the Manila Conference in connexion with the question of possible ways of improving the work of UNCTAD.

115. The socialist countries were grateful to the Director of the Division for Programme Support Services for his statement describing the difficulties which arose as a result of UNCTAD's failure to implement its own resolutions, particularly those aimed at improving the work of the organization. In that connexion, he wished to stress once again the importance of implementing, in particular, resolution 111 (V) and the need to give the closest attention to the matter at the forthcoming session of the ad hoc Intergovernmental Committee on the rationalization of UNCTAD's machinery.

116. Mr. LICHTAN (Canada) said that it was the responsibility of delegations to raise the issue of UNCTAD's resources in the appropriate forums. As the case of small countries, it was very often the most representative who attended them all.

117. Mr. KOECK (Federal Republic of Germany) said that some delegations of Group B countries had been surprised at the secretariat's proposal, without prior consultation with the regional groups, to replace the meeting of the ad hoc High-level Group of Experts to prepare for global consultations on world economic trends and policies by another meeting of high-level experts on interdependence. He suggested that the proposal should be deleted, pending a decision on the subject by the resumed session of the Board in November.

118. Mr. KHAN (India), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the issue of interdependence had been on the Board's agenda for a number of years and that, in its resolution 144 (XVI), it had requested the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to keep the matter under continuous review with the assistance of high-level experts. However, Governments should be consulted before meetings were convened. He therefore suggested that the slot in the calendar and the allocation of budgetary resources should be retained but that the proposal should be implemented in consultation with the regional groups.

119. Mr. BENTHOUD (Director, Division for Programme Support Services) said that under foot-note [1] in document TD/B(XIX)/CRP.3 the secretariat had scheduled 16 weeks of services for which it had the necessary resources, whether or not a particular entry was deleted. On that matter, the secretariat would naturally be guided by the wishes of the Board.

120. In response to a question from the President, he confirmed that the proposed work of the high-level group of experts would be described in terms of Board decision 144 (XVI).

131. Mr. OBEHO (Ghana) said that his delegation would vehemently object to any implication that detracted from the legally binding nature of votes taken in UNCTAD or in any other United Nations body. He believed that the democratic process should apply in UNCTAD.

132. Mr. SOLA VILA (Cuba) said he supported the view that there should be no interference with procedures in international organizations.

133. The PRESIDENT said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Board agreed with the secretariat suggestion that it should authorize its President to address a letter to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee requesting that body not to take up the UNCTAD programme budget until it had received the Board's comments.

134. It was so decided.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE BOARD TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (agenda item 13) (TD/B/L.539 and Add.1-5)

135. Mr. HOUAIDEI (Tunisia), Rapporteur, introduced the draft report of the Board on its nineteenth session (TD/B/L.539 and Add.1-5). The reports of Sessional Committees I and II, which the Board had already adopted, supplemented the account of the discussion in those Committees contained in chapters III, IV and V.

136. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Board should authorize the Rapporteur to complete the report as appropriate.

137. It was so decided.

138. The draft report, as a whole, was adopted.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

139. After an exchange of courtesies, the PRESIDENT declared the session closed.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.